

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a listing of the claims in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121.

1. - 14. (canceled).

15. (previously presented) A system for remotely servicing medical diagnostic equipment, the system comprising:

a first medical diagnostic station of a first modality, the first medical diagnostic station including a service server for accessing data representative of a serviceable operational condition of the first station;

a second medical diagnostic station of a second modality different from the first modality, the second medical diagnostic station including a service server for accessing data representative of a serviceable operational condition of the second station;

a service facility remote from the first and second stations, the service facility including a server for interactively exchanging operational service data with the first and second stations.

16. (original) The system of claim 15, wherein the first and second modalities are selected from a group consisting of magnetic resonance imaging systems, computed tomography systems, x-ray systems and ultrasound systems.

17. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the first and second stations each include an operator interface for initiating a service request for operational servicing of the respective station and a communications circuit for transmitting the service request to the service facility.

18. (previously presented) The system of claim 17, wherein the service facility server is configured to transmit an acknowledgment message to the first or the second station in response to the service request from the respective station.

19. (previously presented) The system of claim 17, wherein the service facility server is configured to prompt data representative of a serviceable operational condition in response to the service request from the first or the second station, and wherein the first and the second stations are configured to transmit the data representative of the serviceable operational condition in response to the prompt.

20. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the serviceable operational condition includes an operational malfunction in an imaging sequence in the first or the second station.

21. (previously presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the serviceable operational condition includes a request for operator useable information.

22. (previously presented) A method for providing remote service to a medical diagnostic system, the method comprising the steps of:

originating a service request for operational servicing of the medical diagnostic system via a user interface in the medical diagnostic system;
transmitting the service request to a service facility via a network connection;
acknowledging receipt of the service request automatically by the service facility via an electronic message to the medical diagnostic system.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, comprising the further step of transmitting operational data from the medical diagnostic system to the service facility representative of a potential operational malfunction of the medical diagnostic system.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the operational data is transmitted from the medical diagnostic system to the service facility in response to a prompt by the service facility.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein the prompt is generated by the service facility automatically in response to the service request.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, comprising the further step of transmitting from the medical diagnostic system data representative of the medical diagnostic system type and identification.

27. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the service request is generated through a preconfigured browser page accessible on the user interface.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, comprising the further step of displaying a visual indicia at the medical diagnostic system indicating receipt of the electronic message from the service facility.

29. (previously presented) A method for exchanging service data between a plurality of medical diagnostic systems and a central service facility, the method comprising the steps of:

composing a service message on a medical diagnostic system, the service message relating to operational servicing of the medical diagnostic system;

linking the medical diagnostic system to a remote service facility via a network connection;

transmitting the service message from the medical diagnostic system to the remote service facility for remote operational servicing of the medical diagnostic system; and

automatically replying to the service message by the service facility to the medical diagnostic system via a return electronic message.

30. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the service message is composed via a user interface.

31. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the service message includes data uniquely identifying the medical diagnostic system.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, comprising the further step of automatically accessing electronic records relating to the medical diagnostic system by the service facility in response to the service message.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the electronic records include data representative of an operational service subscriber status of the medical diagnostic system.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the electronic records include data representative of operational service history for the medical diagnostic system.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, comprising the further steps of:

determining at the service facility log data required to reply to the service message;
automatically linking the service facility to the medical diagnostic system via a network connection; and

transmitting the log data from the medical diagnostic system to the service facility.

36. (previously presented) A method for servicing a plurality of medical diagnostic systems, the method comprising the steps of:

- generating a first service request message in a first diagnostic system of a first modality for operational servicing of the first diagnostic system;
- generating a second service request message in a second diagnostic system of a second modality different from the first modality for operational servicing of the second diagnostic system;
- transmitting the first and second service request messages to a service facility remote from the first and the second diagnostic systems; and
- transmitting acknowledgment messages from the service facility to the first and second diagnostic system in response to the first and second service request messages.

37. (original) The method of claim 36, wherein the first and second modalities are selected from a group including magnetic resonance imaging systems, computed tomography imaging systems, x-ray imaging systems and ultrasound imaging systems.

38. (original) The method of claim 36, including the further step of displaying operator perceptible indicia at the first and second diagnostic systems indicating receipt of the acknowledgment messages.

39. (original) The method of claim 36, wherein the first and second service request messages include data uniquely identifying the respective diagnostic system.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 36, comprising the further steps of:

- establishing a network link between the service facility and the first and second diagnostic systems; and

transmitting operational parameter data from the first and second diagnostic systems to the service facility, the operational parameter data including information indicative of a serviceable operational condition.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 36, comprising the further steps of:

establishing a network link between the service facility and the first and second diagnostic systems, and

transmitting operational service data from the service facility to the first and second diagnostic systems in response to the first and second service request messages.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the operational service data includes configuration parameter data for the respective diagnostic system.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the operational service data includes operator instructions adapted to the respective modality of the respective diagnostic system.

44. (original) The method of claim 36, wherein the service facility includes a plurality of service facilities disposed at locations remote from one another.